be tapped. To promote agriculture he advocated the appointment of an Agricultural Engineer to conduct an irrigation survey and also the opening of Agricultural Banks in important centres and a Savings Bank in each village. Officers on circuit except those of the Education Department should be asked to come in closer contact with the people and ascertain their needs and grievances.

In regard to Vernacular education the Member was of opinion that boys and girls could be taught together up to the 4th class. To avoid unnecessary delay in correspondence, the Deputy Director of Public Instruction should be authorised to correspond direct with Government.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

132. Desirability of allowing the people a real voice in important administrative measures.

Mr. K. Govinda Pillai (Member, Mavelikara taluk) spoke at length about the desirability of associating the people in a greater degree with the Government in the administration of the country and made the following suggestions:—

1. The expansion of the Legislative Council by increasing the number of non-official members so as to give them a majority, by providing for direct election of representatives on a broader franchise, and by giving the members of the Council the power of asking questions and supplementary questions regarding the general administration, of moving resolutions on matters of public interest and of discussing the budget.

2. The re-organisation of the Popular Assembly on a more responsible and useful basis.

3. The creation of Village, Taluk and District Boards.

4. The appointment of a Committee to undertake an economic survey of the country and to suggest measures to improve the economic condition of the people.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

133. Need for giving the representatives of the people a sufficient degree of control over Government affairs.

The Rev. Fr. A. J. Michael (Member, T. I. C., Kayankulam) dwelt upon the necessity of allowing the representatives of the people a greater voice in the administration of the affairs of the State and suggested the following reforms. It was necessary that the qualifying minimum tax for voters electing Members to the Popular Assembly should be reduced from Rs. 50, at least in the case of Christians and other communities among whom partition is in vogue to Rs. 5 or Rs.10, the Pulayas and Parayas being exempted from property qualification. The Members of the Assembly should be given the power to discuss the budget, frame Bills, interpellate Government on administrative questions and bring to the notice of Government the conduct of erring officers. If the powers described above could not be conferred on the Members of the Assembly at present, the Members of the Legislative Council might be given those powers for the time being.

He then touched upon the necessity of establishing at least Taluk Boards at once, if not Village and District Boards also.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

134. Suggestions regarding the general administration of the State.

Mr. Thariathu Kunjithommen (Member, Muvattupuzha taluk) submitted that his chief complaint was that sufficient attention was not being paid to satisfy the ordinary conveniences and comforts of the people in the interior rural parts of the State. There was no doubt that the constant tours undertaken by the Dewan served to give him a knowledge of some of their wants and grievances in the villages and much relief was also being given by him as a result of his tours. But a good deal remained to be done. It did not seem to be as well and effectively recognised as it ought to be that the major portion of the State revenue was contributed by the

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

ryots in the villages and not by the people in urban areas. In regard to the expenditure of public money, it was necessary that some fixed standard should be recognised such as population or revenue of each taluk. The present system of financial adjustment revealed the fact that the allotment became less and less as one proceeded from the south to the north and the Kottayam Division got the least amount as was evident from the absence of even the indispensable means of communication. The same was the case in regard to schools and hospitals. The impression of the people in the country parts was that a school or a hospital was given to such areas as had clusters of houses and not to localities which had detached homesteads, even though the latter might be larger in number for the same area. The aim of Government, no doubt, was that all conveniences should be given to the people both in the country parts and in the towns. But the defect chiefly lay in the fact that the Heads of Departments did not fully realise those aims. What was worse, officers of the lower grade *i. e.*, those drawing Rs. 100 and less, were corrupt and they did not deal with the people in the proper manner. Very often those officers considered the people as slaves and tried to worry and annoy them in view to obtain illegal gratification. They were also showing distinctions of caste in the matter of the loaves and fishes of office as a result of which all classes did not get their due share of appointments in the State Service. The Member advocated that merit should be recognised, irrespective of caste or creed, and that those possessing the highest qualification should be preferred. The principle, he explained, was not being followed in practice.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

135. Government and the Public.

Mr. P. M. Narayana Kurup (Member, Chirayinkil taluk) observed that hearty and willing co-operation of the people with Government in all measures of public utility was an essential condition of a stable and well-ordered system of administration. The Member was of opinion that such co-operation was wanting here, for the ways of the officials were always in the direction of self-interest and illegal gratification. They never tried to enquire whose money it was that they were drawing as fat salaries, what their duties by the people were; nor did they understand that really they were the servants of the people. When famine was stalking in the land and when people were suffering all forms of hardships on account of high prices of food stuffs, there were officials who, instead of saving the poor people from starvation, colluded with the merchants and enriched themselves. Besides, there were also officers in the Judicial, Forest, Education and Land Revenue Departments who were corrupt. If administrators of justice were swayed by illegal considerations, what could be more harmful to the welfare of the people? In the Forest Department timber was being sold to foreigners at rates less than those at which it was sold to local merchants. The Education Department which was the most innocent had now become subject to serious defects. The Land Revenue Department had some officers who had come to tolerate rampant corruption in connection with the management of Devaswoms, while the disposal of *puduval* lands by the Revenue authorities was an open door to objectionable ways and practices on the part of the officials.

Dewan.—The Member and the previous speaker attribute corruption to officers of the lower grade. Any stranger not knowing Travancore is likely to be led to believe that Travancore is hopelessly corrupt, and that the people are entirely at the mercy of such without character or control from central authority. Travancoreans know what value should be given to such remarks. For the information of those who may not be fully acquainted with the conditions of Travancore, I would say that the allegations of this kind are wholly unfounded and unjustifiable. I am not to be understood as saying that the State service as a whole is spotless or free from corruption. It may be there are some black sheep amongst the subordinate service, but a wholesale condemnation of the kind made is unjustifiable, human nature being what it is. I may add, as a result of my experience of Travancore and intimate contact with officials and non-officials in the State during the past several years, that the Travancore service has nothing to be ashamed of in comparison with the public service elsewhere.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly